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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

as follows: The crisp, pale green leaves were passed lightly heaped in a great porcelain shell with iridescent glaze; among them were sprinkled the richly hued orange and crimson blossoms of the nasturtium, which produced the most enchanting effect of colors, and gave just that slight flavor of nasturtium which epicures believe is so great an addition to salad.

Very effective mediæval vases and panels are at present reproduced for panels of every size with the fancy nails used by upholsterers: these come in many shades of gold, copper, steel etc. On a large scale handsome dados may be made by decorating them with bold arabesques delineated with these nails, which also may be set round the ceiling as an ornament for a frieze. The cloth hangings for a room arranged in this style were strewn with smaller scrolls and powderings, also reproduced with nails, which were well thrown off by the dark ground color of the cloth, in harmony with the plain wall paper. In fact, the variety of the shapes and color of these nails is so great just now, that they offer scope for easily and quickly ornamenting any kind of wood or fairly thick material ready for decorative purposes.

Pretty picture frames are made by gilding the plain frame and covering it with black or white lace. The pattern shows beautifully over the gold background and the effect is wonderfully artistic. Another frame which enclosed a large size photograph was covered with white velvet, studded with golden butterflies.

INFLUENCES AFFECTING STYLES OF FURNITURE.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.



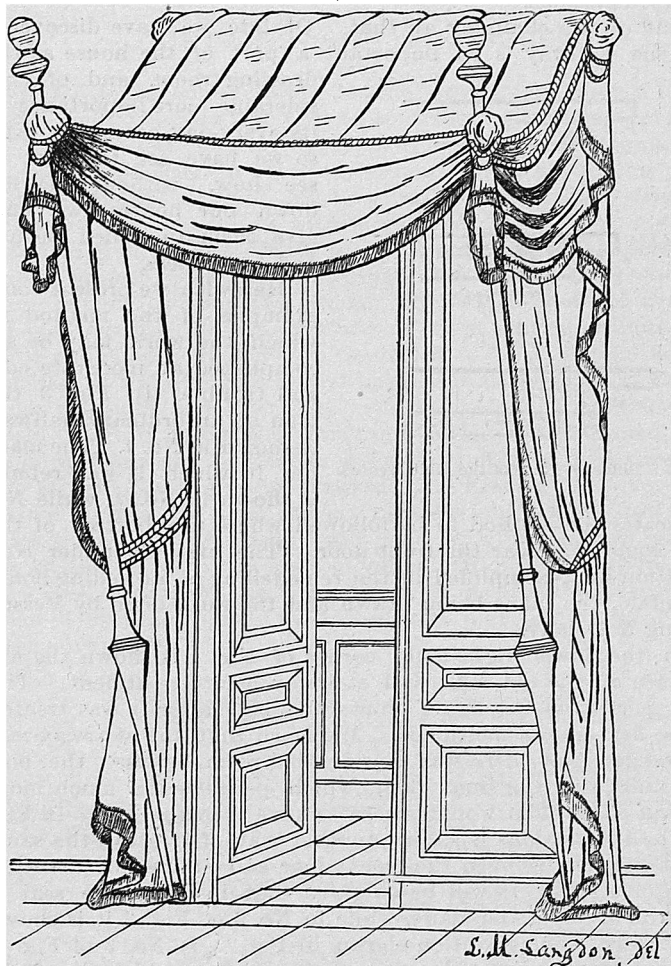
It is a curious fact that our present folding and combination articles of furniture, used to economise space, had their counterpart in the middle ages, a fact learnt from historic records, as well as the few existing examples. This construction was a provision for ready transport of the furniture on the back of sumpter mules on the part of owners of castles and seignorial mansions in case of invasion, and their being compelled to flee in the event of civil broils. The tables, too cumbersome to be carried off at short notice, were purposely rendered of little value by being made of mere boards and trestles; so no folding arrangement was wanted for these.

In each of the successive phases that furniture has undergone in the past, the chief directing influences in occasioning and developing change, are generally apparent. In the more peaceable times succeeding the middle ages, provision for sudden flight from residences was abandoned, tables were constructed in their entirety and furniture made an advance towards our modern forms.

The desire for sumptuous surroundings with the view of enhancing royal dignity, was the inspiration of Louis XIV, who thus imparted an impulse to the production of artistic furniture that was felt for two centuries after, and gave France throughout that time leadership in its production. Beyond gratifying the love of gold and glitter, its main purpose, the style was more general in its aims than any that had preceded it. So that the one condition was met, all decorative arts were welcomed; but light and shade effects and harmonies of color were disregarded. The designs for furnishing gigantic saloons and staterooms, were confided to eminent artists, and workshops were concentrated under the roof of one vast building, the better to carry out those designs in their integrity. The gloom of ebony furniture was replaced by oak, resolute, severe unbending lines were rendered flowing, wood-carving reached at a bound the zenith of excellence, the more massive pieces of furniture being enriched by elegant groups and graceful arabesques. Lacquer ornamental work found abundant application. Chests, no longer cumbersome and unsightly, were adorned with gold plaques and elaborate carvings. Consol tables appeared with carved legs and rich mountings. Prominent features of furnishing were numerous large mirrors in carved gilded frames that reflected Turkish carpets, clock cases with marvellous inlays, vases of jasper with gold mountings and chased wreaths. In relief ornament coated with gilding natural forms were followed in realistic style. Glowing effects were wanted and obtained. This adoption of brilliance as a key note would seem to have been needed to stimulate art to put forth its full energies. The efforts after glittering display in furnishing, heedless of the forms under which it couched, and consequent freedom of inventiveness, led to the most varied applications of technical skill, and with lasting benefit, for art survives its day of birth through traditional practice. But the riotous pleasures of sensationalism will not last forever. With Louis XV came capriciousness in styles of furniture, without any distinct aim but the display of ingenuity and the compassing of

novelty. The cabinet and furniture makers, the metal workers, inlayers, carvers and gilders, were deserted by the artists who had mapped out the brilliant accomplishments of the preceding reign and supervised the execution. They had to find out for themselves new effects and combinations. Furniture was loaded with ornamental details, differences in these simply corresponding to different individual fancies, furniture assuming extravagant forms, often lying away from utility for the display of surface ornamentation. In other respects, style was piled on style, and symmetry disregarded. The eccentricities of carving resulted in contours contorted into broken rock and shell curves. Vegetative forms were twisted into girandoles and lustres, and all this for novel scenic effects. One sound idea lodged under the rococo mode of treatment regardless of convenient use.

The introduction of mahogany at the end of the century led to a massiveness of furniture previously unknown, and with it, owing to the qualities of the wood, in itself so highly ornamental, a higher degree of simplicity. Similarly the introduction of colored woods at a later period owing to the extension of European



CANOPIED DECORATION FOR ENTRANCE HALL.

commerce in the far East introduced the system of inlaying furniture with these, and imported natural colored woods being insufficient resort was had to artificially colored woods. It is only in comparatively recent years that this description of inlay, capable of superb effects as borders and centers of furniture has been neglected. We have added, however, to the woods of construction, the red cedar of California, with its susceptibility for fine polish and bright and varied hue, taking the lead.

Even political influences have had their influence on furniture. Thus in the short-lived rule of the French Directory when republican principles held sway, or were at least professed, duplicates of Roman tables with their massive metallic mountings and mosaic inlays were all the rage in France, and classic designs of vases and bas-reliefs were copied on chairs and tables.

By a natural law of reaction the extremes which marked the reigns of Louis XIV. and XV. gave place under that of Louis XVI. to an elegant simplicity. The furniture style showed antique forms freely modified. Delicate ornament prevailed and bright colors of light hues took largely the place of gilding.

Panels of rooms were admirably painted with pastoral and homely scenes. Plaques of Sevres china were inserted in furniture; also exquisitely worked marquetry enriched with bronze.

Satin wood, from its delicacy of hue became a favorite material for consoles and tables. From other than a French point of view the simplicity—indeed, the *style de la Reine*—savored somewhat of affectation, but it brought with it higher aspirations and purer tastes.

Without commenting on succeeding styles, we may observe in conclusion that our leading cabinet and furniture makers, whilst availing themselves of suggestions seek to be guided by those principles which not only concern taste but adaptation to present requirements.